

# MARKETING WEEKENDER™

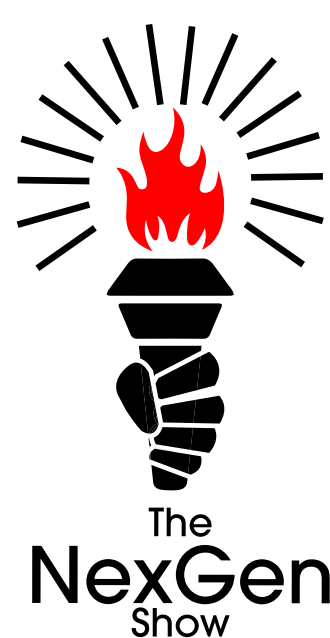
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41 EPISODES, AND MORE TO GO...

# WEEKENDER

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The  
**NexGen**  
Show

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# A TIMELY TRIBUTE TO ALL NEXGENERERS

It all started at a funeral.

I never thought an ending could mark a new beginning.

I went to pay my respects to an old friend, an amazing Art Director I worked with, and there I met his son. We spoke for a while.

What struck me was not just his grief, but his spark. The ideas. The clarity. The quiet confidence of someone young who was already thinking like an idea generator.

And it sent me back many moons to my own first step into this industry.

Those who know me know I did not stroll in through the front door. I more or less gatecrashed my way in, and was hired in a case of mistaken turbanity. The people who hired me could not tell the difference between one turban and another.

It was a happy accident, but it taught me something lasting. Opportunity is not always earned on a level field. Sometimes it is stumbled into. Sometimes it is denied altogether.

That funeral conversation made one thought feel unavoidable. If I got

in by accident, then surely I have a responsibility to make it easier for others to get in on purpose.

So together with my comrades in arms, Nathalie Tay, an entrepreneur who works with me, and the highly talented Daween Maan, who runs a studio that brings stories to life through podcasts, we sat down and we built what became The NexGen Show.

A simple idea with a serious intent: give young talent and fresh graduates a platform to be seen, heard, and taken seriously.

We committed to a weekly Sunday evening release. No grand commercial plans. No profit motive. Just a non profit, non commercial passion project between the three of us. More than a year later, we have crossed 40 episodes. And I can tell you, the experience has been life-changing. I have personally lost count of the number of remarkable young people this project has highlighted to our world.

Last week, the three of us sat down and asked the obvious question. Do we continue?

# ... Opportunity is not always earned on a level field...



The answers were obvious.

We are pleased to announce that we are continuing. We will keep providing a platform for the young to elevate themselves within the industry, using the network we have built through our weekly magazine, our website and our social platforms.

This edition is our tribute to these NexGeners.

It showcases them, their stories, and the nuggets of hope they have shared with us.

I hope you enjoy these 15-minute snippets, and more importantly, I hope you come away with a deeper

appreciation of the talent now enriching our industry.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harmandar Singh'.

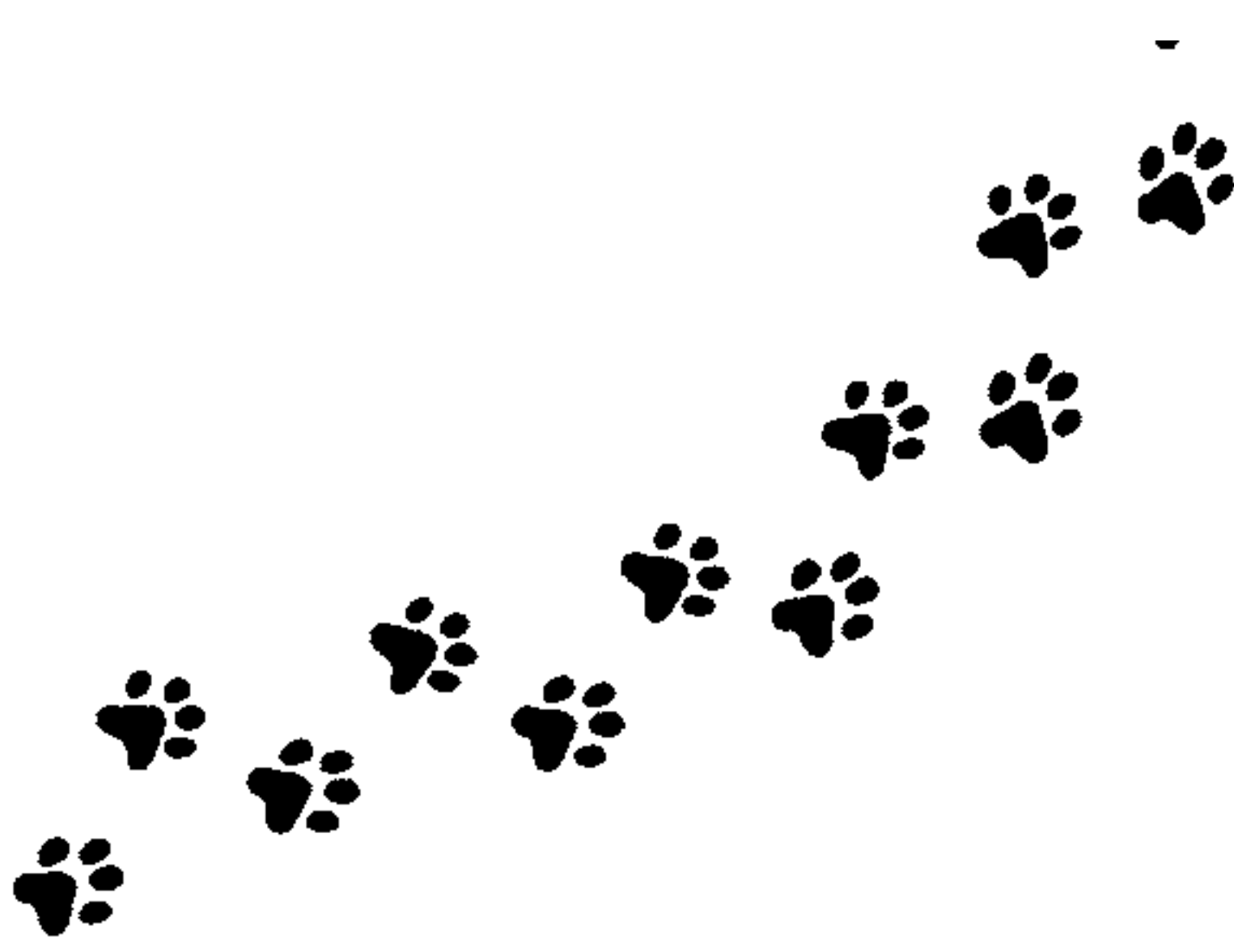
Prof Harmandar Singh aka Ham

**THE NEXGEN  
SHOW**

**“THANK YOU  
FOR THE  
APPLAUSE.”**



**E**ach conversation is a short window into how young marketers, creatives and strategists think, struggle, learn and level up. You will meet fresh voices with sharp instincts, big questions, and practical lessons they picked up the hard way. Dip in and explore the episodes like a playlist. Start anywhere, follow your curiosity, and let one story lead you to another. The nuggets are everywhere. Career pivots, creative habits, confidence gaps, mentor moments, and the small decisions that shape a future. Give them fifteen minutes. You will leave with ideas and optimism!



### **Episode 1: Nathalie Tay, Digital Marketer & Entrepreneur**

## **A ROLLERCOASTER CAREER.**

The first guest turned content producer for The NexGen Show, Nathalie Tay lives in a world where content creation, advertising, and strategy intersect. But when asked about her work, she hardly knows where to begin.

“I do a big mix of things,” she shares. “Everything from social media to events to content management, and sometimes, writing.”

Having left the agency life behind, Nathalie handles clients across platforms, often managing

# “Writing is so second nature to me that I don’t really feel the need to use tools like ChatGPT.”

projects independently from pitching through to payment.

“It’s a rollercoaster. I’ve had really good clients, I’ve had clients who don’t pay on time, and I’ve worked with clients where the pay is so small that it hardly matters,” she jokes.

Writing remains her passion, drawing inspiration from a wide range of sources from editorials to advertising. Even as AI tools become more common, Nathalie continues to rely on instinct.

“Writing is so second nature to me that I don’t really feel the need to use tools like ChatGPT. By the time I even think of the prompt, the caption is already in my head,” she laughs.

When asked about the future of advertising in Malaysia, she hopes that brands will place greater trust in marketers.

“Marketers here have great ideas, but it gets stuck because brands don’t want to take the risk or equate marketing too directly with sales,” she explains. “The mindset is very different overseas.”



## Episode 2: Nazir Fuad, Senior Digital Strategist

### GROWING THROUGH THE GRIND.

A rising talent in the advertising world, Nazir Fuad opens up about the challenges, thrills, and learning curves of agency life as he crosses his fourth year in the industry.

“A lot of agency people work overnight, long nights, weekends. Sacrifices for one big pitch,” he shares. “You learn to enjoy the process, and if you win, great. If not, you learn and move on.”

Festive campaigns, such as those for Chinese New Year, bring their own set of challenges.

“How do you tell a story that everyone else is telling in a different way? How can you stand out in a very saturated space?” he says. “The best campaigns subtly slip in their message or brand. Less is more.”

However, Nazir emphasised that a successful campaign relies as much on collaboration as on creativity.

“I particularly like clients who are active listeners. Leaders who listen to feedback are very strong,” he explains. “Clients open to ideas and discussion have been the best I’ve worked with.”

When asked for advice for anyone entering advertising, Nazir offered a few candid words.

“The industry is great, but it’s going to be a hustle for the next couple of years,” he says. “If you love being in a creative space and constantly learning, it’s the perfect place to be. Just remember: the grind is part of the journey.”

**“The best campaigns subtly slip in their message or brand. Less is more.”**

 Spotify  YouTube



**Episode 3: Yasmin Chua, Account Manager**

## **YOUR NETWORK IS YOUR NET WORTH.**

An expert at delivering client happiness, Yasmin Chua began her career in events before she managed client accounts in a boutique agency.

“When I first started out, by some weird alignment of the stars, I found myself working on events that were within the advertising, media, marketing space. That’s when my interest grew,” she shares.

Today, her work focuses on project management, client servicing, and campaign execution — a demanding role that can be highly rewarding over time.

“I had a client when I first joined who was horrible. The first time a client made me cry on the job. Fast forward two years, and we love each other,” she shares. “Everything is really under your control, it’s just a matter of how you steer it.”

Through sharing her experiences, Yasmin emphasizes that creativity, resilience, adaptability, and human connection are key to a fulfilling career in marketing.

“Your network is your net worth, and it all starts with the people you work with every day,” she says. “If you don’t have a solid relationship with them, how are you going to deliver something that clients will love?”

**“I had a client when I first joined who was horrible. The first time a client made me cry on the job. Fast forward two years, and we love each other.”**

## THE NEXGEN SHOW



#### Episode 4: Samantha Rayer, Assistant Manager, Campaign Strategy

### FROM TEST TUBES TO OUT-OF-HOME.

Samantha Rayer was a former microbiologist who realised she wasn't in the right place.

"During my internship as a microbiologist, the only things I got to talk to were Petri dishes and test tubes," she recalls. "I realized I couldn't do this for the rest of my life."

Encouraged by her supportive parents, Samantha took a leap of faith — and ended up in out-of-home advertising, a year and a half later thriving as a campaign planner. In her current role, Samantha strategizes campaigns, plans media placements, and oversees execution across a variety of OOH platforms — from billboards to transit, lifts, shopping malls, and even ambient media.

"Out-of-home is underappreciated," she says. "I love showing clients the impact of something they might not notice every day."

She also discusses the viral potential of "fake OOH" videos. One latest trend involves the use of 3D animation to create immersive visual experiences that look impressive on screen, but might not exist in real life.

"A lot of people receive these videos from their friends and think that's exactly what they're going to get, then we have to tell people it's actually not real," she laughs.

"This is how digital and out-of-home complements each other. I'm sure there will be people going to look for the screen and it won't be there, and it costs nothing!"

**"I love showing clients the impact of something they might not notice every day."**



#### Episode 5: Ethan Wong, Director & Photographer

### CREATIVE EXPERIMENTALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE.

Described as a "creative experimentalist" and "creative adventurer," Ethan Wong shares the journey that brought him from student life into the heart of Malaysia's creative scene.

## THE NEXGEN SHOW

“I majored in marketing during the peak of COVID, and I realized that my major wasn’t giving me the experience I wanted,” he shared. “That’s when I decided to find a new job while I was studying, and that opened all the doors for me.”

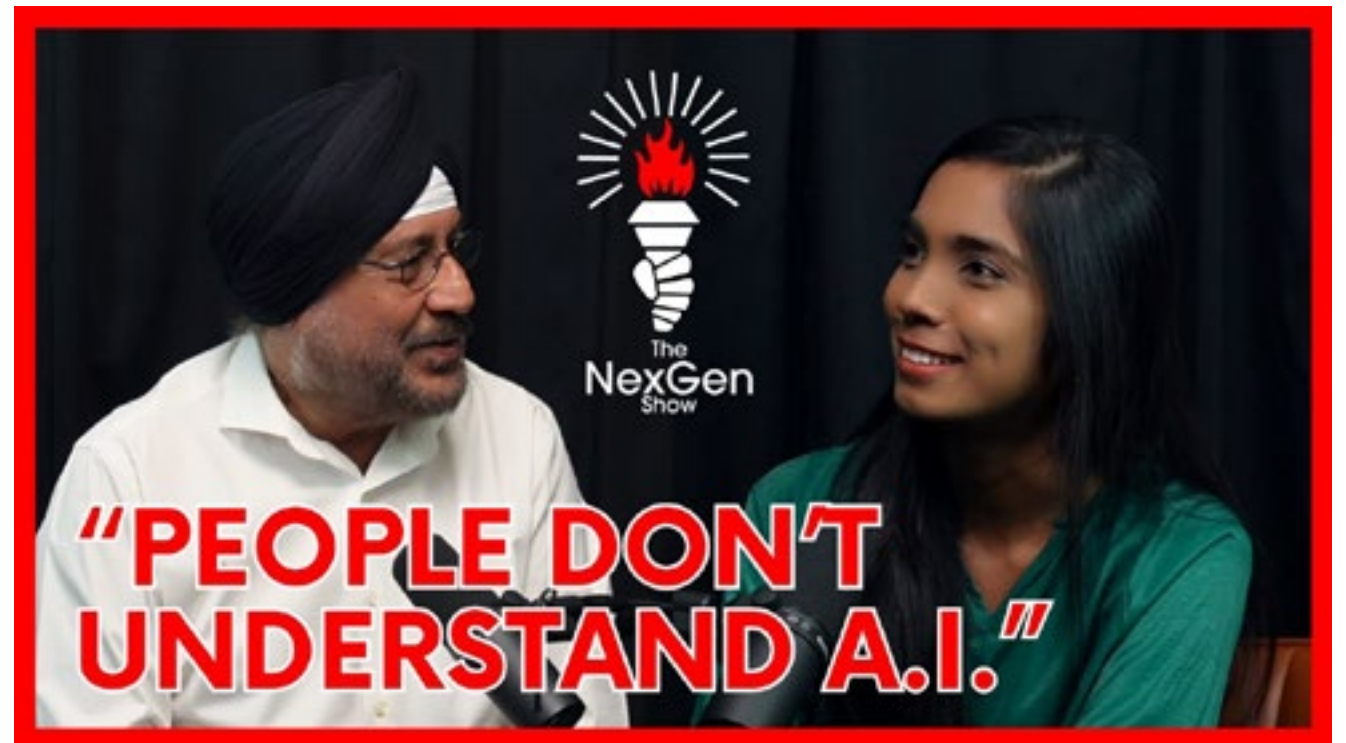
Ethan first immersed himself in Safe House, an event space for creatives in KL, where he met artists across fields — rappers, fine artists, chefs, and creative directors — before eventually committing to photography.

“My dad loved taking pictures and videos, so it rubbed off on me,” he explains. “I realized photography was a medium for me to express my ideas myself, without relying on others. That’s how I started taking pictures seriously.”

In his episode, Ethan walks us through his visual projects, from experimental photo series inspired by Spanish designer Louis Vuitton’s latex campaigns, to shooting album visuals for local artists like Sha Hu and collaborative projects for nightclubs.

“I just want to do more, make more mistakes, and learn by hitting walls. Down the line, I see myself as a director, maybe even working overseas,” he says.

**“I realized photography was a medium for me to express my ideas myself, without relying on others.”**



### Episode 6: Jean D’Silva, Content Producer

## BROADCASTING BABY.

Jean D’Silva always knew that she wanted to work with people, whether that was her studies in psychology or her career in broadcasting. Her career move into the fast-paced world of radio and content production makes perfect sense.

“I’ve always loved the entertainment industry, especially anything involved in content and presenting. Whether or not you’re in front of the camera, you’re always networking, interviewing people, and meeting people,” she says, describing a day in her life.

In the episode, this broadcasting “baby” shares her experience behind and in front of the camera, including her work with Malaysia’s first AI-powered radio DJ.

“DJ Aina is an announcer. All her content is created and produced behind the scenes, and she stands out with her own character,” she explains.

“A lot of people still don’t really understand how artificial intelligence can be the new future in our industry, but it can be very interesting if people give it a chance.”

Looking ahead, Jean envisions moving from behind the camera to hosting and creating her own content on screen.

## THE NEXGEN SHOW

“Since I was young, my dream has been to host,” she shares. “Psychology helps me understand humans, my audience, and the creative side. Freelance hosting lets me connect with people, and networking creates opportunities you never imagine.”

**“A lot of people still don’t really understand how artificial intelligence can be the new future in our industry, but it can be very interesting if people give it a chance.”**

 Spotify  YouTube



**Episode 7: Farida Musa, Strategy Manager**

**YOU CAN'T HIDE THE TRUTH.**

Farida Musa had a background in economics and research before she decided to make the pivot to advertising.

“I liked the idea of bridging the gap between brands and their audiences,” she says. “Instead of generalising your campaigns, how

do you become more relevant to your consumers?”

In her episode, this research-turned-marketer reveals the hard truths behind the data, and why you should always take it with a pinch of salt.

“Just because 70% of Malaysians claim they are healthy, doesn’t mean that 70% of Malaysians are healthy,” she explains. “Research is all about what people are willing to admit to themselves.”

Fara also points out the limits of data. While online platforms can offer insights from tens of thousands of users, the “why” behind consumer behaviour remains critical.

“Big data tells you what happens, but not why. You don’t know why they’re there, why they spend so much time there, or what makes them stay. That’s why research is valuable,” she explains.

Part of her job is the delicate balance of delivering insights to clients, including when research challenges assumptions or campaigns.

“Sometimes I have to deliver bad news, but I try to be positive about it,” she says. “If something isn’t working, it’s better to know now than not at all.”

**“Research is all about what people are willing to admit to themselves.”**





### Episode 8: Wyman Wai, Strategic Planner

## P.RAMLEE AND BRANDING.

Before Wyman Wai was a strategic marketer, he worked in performing arts — and the two have more in common than you think.

“Advertisers are both the directors and actors in a sense,” he muses. “We both come in with this understanding of people and how we want to communicate our stories to them.”

Wyman draws on his theatre experience to observe audiences and decode intentions behind behaviours, adding depth to his strategic work.

“I stage-manage campaigns in a way. Directing how brands communicate to consumers, almost like directing a play,” he shares.

His industry experience has already seen early successes. Participating in the Young Cannes Lions, Wyman’s team took home the Young Cannes award, cementing his potential as a rising talent in strategy. Despite being just a few months into the industry, Wyman brings a unique perspective from his performing arts background, translating his understanding of human behaviour into actionable brand strategies.

“Strategic planning is both a science and a form of art. There’s

the methodological part of the process, then the personalisation of each campaign to the client’s needs,” he says.

**“We both come in with this understanding of people and how we want to communicate our stories to them.”**



### Episode 9: Jean Elliessa, Graphic Designer

## THE SPEED OF RELEVANCE.

In a digital world where content turnover gets faster, and algorithms become increasingly unpredictable, where do advertisers land? In her episode, young graphic designer Jean Elliessa dives into some hard truths about this era of disposable advertising.

“It feels a little demotivating to create a visual that might be forgotten in the next month,” she confesses, “but that is why you’ve got to keep churning out new ideas and new visuals.”

## THE NEXGEN SHOW

Jean's take on modern trends is pragmatic. While memes and viral content flood social media, she emphasizes that a professional designer is indispensable.

"The algorithm is basically playing with audiences, so we need to stay updated with what audiences like the most," she shares. "It's up to designers to understand what works and what doesn't work."

Her day-to-day work involves crafting visuals for multiple platforms, ensuring brand consistency, and adapting content across different formats. She thrives on the challenge, hoping to expand her skill set into video production and editing in the coming years.

"I like the rules, the structure, and the technicalities," she says. "I think it stems from me playing strategy games. I love knowing what you can or cannot do, then there's the fun of solving it through design."

**"The algorithm is basically playing with audiences, so we need to stay updated with what audiences like the most."**



### Episode 10: Michael Tan, Mass Communications Graduate

## FRESH GRADUATE, BIG AMBITIONS.

When Michael Tan agreed to be a guest on The NexGen Show, he didn't expect to be sitting down for a job interview.

"I originally considered psychology," he confesses, "but advertising seemed like the perfect way to combine communication and psychology, to understand behavior and convey ideas effectively."

With three years of academic experience and hands-on projects, Michael is ready for the steep learning curve of a fast-evolving industry, including the unpredictable changes technology will bring.

"It's natural for people to feel threatened by AI," he says, reflecting on advances in AI tools like ChatGPT. "But I think it can be used to our advantage if we integrate it properly into our work."

Despite being new to the professional scene, Michael's portfolio shows promise. He has won the Malaysian Digital Association (MDA) Awards and the Young Cal Awards, both in 2024.

His winning projects focused on sustainability and creative branding, including a campaign promoting alternative protein snacks using black soldier fly larvae — proof that even student work can make a real impact.

When asked why an employer should hire him, his answer was clear: “As a fresh graduate, I think flexibility and a willingness to learn is important. Being able to admit that you may not know as much as you think is very important too.”

**“I originally considered psychology, but advertising seemed like the perfect way to combine communication and psychology, to understand behavior and convey ideas effectively.”**



Episode 11: Dionne Lee, Account Executive

## **JUGGLING CHAOS AND EGOS.**

In the business of managing people, no one has it tougher than account managers. Yet account executive Dionne Lee confesses that many clients and creatives still have

misconceptions about her role.

“Most older generation clients still think of us as pure messengers, but our role today goes beyond that,” she shares. “We have our own thoughts and opinions that we can bring to the table.”

In reality, the skills of a great account manager ranges from brand research to becoming a mind reader. From questioning vague briefs to keeping projects on track, they are often the ones making sure chaos does not derail creativity.

“In this job, you have to be a good listener,” she explains. “You have to take the time to understand what the client wants and what the brand needs, even if it goes against your personal biases.”

Despite the pressures, Dionne remains pragmatic. No client, she believes, is truly impossible — only challenging. Her dream client is refreshingly simple: one who listens, communicates transparently and has a budget that matches their ambition.

Until then, she is focused on learning — moving through different agencies and cultures before eventually crossing over to the “dark side” of marketing.

**“In this job, you have to be a good listener. You have to take the time to understand what the client wants and what the brand needs, even if it goes against your personal biases.”**

## THE NEXGEN SHOW



## Episode 12: Aidan Nasri, Lecturer

**TEACHER IS SPEAKING.**

In an industry that reinvents itself almost daily, the question is no longer whether advertising is changing — it is whether education is changing fast enough to keep up. For IACT lecturer Aidan Nasri, the answer lies not in chasing every new trend, but in rethinking how young talent is prepared for the real world.

“We let the students experience everything themselves,” he says, from creative strategy and ideation to the realities of demanding production schedules. “We want people who are hands-on and can get the job done.”

Exposure beyond the classroom plays a key role in that learning. IACT students regularly attend award shows and industry events, giving them a chance to see how ideas turn into real, celebrated campaigns.

“Of course, I can teach them the SWOT analysis and 4Ps in the classroom, but it’s only when they see it translate to award-winning campaigns that the theory makes sense,” he explains.

Aidan also points to a generational shift, describing his students as the first form of true digital natives.

“These are people who have no experience with analog devices,” he says. “They grew up

with the internet, and as a result, they’re more digitally proficient and more comfortable exploring new technologies.”

“Unlike the generations that came before, Gen Zs appreciate balance. They know how to toe the fine line between professionalism and putting themselves first in terms of mental health,” he adds.

**“Of course, I can teach them the SWOT analysis and 4Ps in the classroom, but it’s only when they see it translate to award-winning campaigns that the theory makes sense.”**



## Episode 13: Alyssa Mia Goh, Junior Copywriter

**THE MAGICAL POWER OF COPY.**

Long before Alyssa Mia Goh was writing brand manifestos and campaign scripts, she imagined a future as an artist. That early passion led her into a specialised high school, where students were



already building brands, pitching ideas and defending their work in front of panels.

“I thought I would become a graphic designer,” she recalls. “Then I met a university counsellor who changed my mind. He said it’s not easy. It’s not always about getting to create the art you want to create.”

That realisation pushed Mia to explore the wider communications world through media studies, advertising and design — until she discovered copywriting.

At first, the word itself felt abstract. “When you’re young, you think copywriting means copying what other people write,” she laughs. But an internship changed everything. Writing for brands gave her something she had been searching for all along.

“I want to be able to learn forever, and that’s what copywriting has allowed me to do,” she shares. “There’s always something new to learn, whether it’s about a brand or a type of target audience.”

Even though writing is described as a solitary craft, Mia sees it as a form of connection. “I’m actually very introverted, but becoming a writer has changed my perspective on everything,” she confesses.

“It’s not so much about selling what the brand has to offer, but selling what the person needs from the brand, and convincing the client that this is how we should talk to them,” she adds.

**“When you’re young, you think copywriting means copying what other people write.”**



**Episode 14: Amy Aminudin, Marketing Undergraduate & Entrepreneur**

## **ADVERPRENEURS ARE HERE.**

At most universities, students spend their days juggling lectures, assignments and group projects. For Amy Aminudin, those same days also involve running a startup, producing content for YouTube, and building Asia’s first dedicated online horse marketplace.

“When I was purchasing my first horse, I noticed a lot of pain points in the process. There was no transparency, no options to compare or explore,” she explains. “That was when I knew there was an opportunity to come up with a solution.”

While platforms in Europe and Australia already facilitate equine trading through sophisticated breeder networks and online catalogues, she saw a clear gap in Southeast Asia. That solution was HorseHub Asia, an online platform designed to facilitate connections with the equestrian community.

While Amy is still completing her studies, she already demonstrates a strong understanding of her audience and how HorseHub must be positioned.

“Equestrian sports are affluent,” she explains. “A lot of money is being put into the sport, so we

need to respond with tailored and exclusive services that match the price they pay.”

Her course in social media management plays a crucial role in that strategy, allowing her to apply the theories she learns in the classroom directly to her business.

“My business is heavily online, so I apply a lot of what I learn to gain more audiences and create content that resonates with them,” she shares.

**“A lot of money is being put into the sport, so we need to respond with tailored and exclusive services that match the price they pay.”**



Episode 15: Kerryane Tan, Junior Strategist

## CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST.

Trained in design and Adobe tools, Kerryane Tan initially saw herself as a creative. But when it came time to choose an internship, curiosity led her down a different path. That decision placed her at the heart of brand strategy, where

creativity takes a different form.

“As a strategist, you’re wearing different shoes every day,” she says. “One day you’re thinking like Gen Alpha, the next day you’re imagining what it’s like to be a pregnant mother. Every day I get to step into a new mind and that’s what is interesting about the job.”

Early in her career, she learned that culture sits at the centre of everything. Rather than chasing fleeting trends, Kerryane has learned to track deeper shifts in behaviour across Malaysia, Asia and the West.

“Culture is not something that only lasts a few months. It is something that will impact your business for the next three to five years,” she shares. “But this can be tough to explain to clients when all they want is sales.”

Malaysia’s cultural diversity makes that challenge both complex and inspiring, but Kerryane hopes to help more brands connect meaningfully with their customers through understanding culture.

“In Malaysia, we are extremely sensitive about a lot of things,” she muses. “How do we sidestep those sensitivities to create good ads? That’s the question I always throw to my creatives.”

**“Culture is not something that only lasts a few months. It is something that will impact your business for the next three to five years.”**



Episode 16: Laxshmaan  
Balakrishnan, Copywriter

## YOUNG AND HUNGRY.

Advertising was never just a career choice for Laxshmaan Balakrishnan — it was a childhood obsession. Long before he entered the industry, he was already fascinated by the power of commercials.

“It has been my passion ever since I was five or six years old,” he explains. “I didn’t understand why at the time, but I was mesmerised by how commercials were able to condense a story into 15 to 30 seconds.”

Inspired by the greats like David Ogilvy and Howard Gossage, Laxshmaan sees advertising as the art of persuasion, where the true impact lies in understanding people and their interests.

“People don’t like ads,” he says, quoting legendary creative Howard Gossage. “They like what they’re interested in, and sometimes that happens to be an ad.”

In a fragmented media landscape dominated by TikTok, creators and constant scrolling, the challenge is no longer visibility, but resonance. For Laxshmaan, this new ecosystem has only heightened the importance of his craft.

“Just because you can write, doesn’t mean you have honed your craft,” he comments. “I’ve noticed more and more people sound the

same. Everyone’s putting out the same messaging, the same format.”

He believes that a writer should never confine themselves to one style, but rather what works. “Every word that I pin down in writing, I ask myself. Is this enough to move me? Do I care about this?” he adds.

**“Just because you can write, doesn’t mean you have honed your craft, I’ve noticed more and more people sound the same.”**



Episode 17: Amni Azhar, Strategic  
Planner

## FROM JUNIOR TO FUTURE.

While many new hires rush to shed the ‘junior’ title, young strategic planner Amni Azhar is embracing every moment of it.

“Being a junior allows me to explore so many things,” she shares. “I told my boss that I’m here to be a sponge and absorb as much knowledge as I can.”

For Amni, being a junior is not about hierarchy — it is about mindset. It is the freedom to ask questions, make mistakes, and bring fresh perspectives to the table.

That openness has given her access to experiences many juniors rarely get: sitting in on client meetings, attending award shows, joining pitches, and presenting strategy ideas in front of senior clients. It has also reshaped how she sees herself.

“When I first started, I was so self-conscious about whether I was going to be a good planner,” she reminisces. “But then I realised, who cares if you suck? Being a junior is a process, and when you want to be great, you must first gain the experience.”

In a business that depends on ideas, she sees that “innocence” as an asset.

“Juniors see things from a different perspective,” she explains. “They might not necessarily be right, but that’s where you own up to your mistakes and learn along the way.”

**“But then I realised, who cares if you suck? Being a junior is a process, and when you want to be great, you must first gain the experience.”**



### Episode 18: Adam Ang, Public Relations Graduate

## UNAFRAID TO ADAPT.

For newly minted graduate Adam Ang, public relations isn’t just a job title. It is a way to apply his natural inclination towards people, relationships, and collaboration.

“I love socialising, meeting new people, working with clients,” he shares. “Whether it’s at a desk or at an event, building connections is what I enjoy the most.”

His academic training taught him the foundations — writing, presentations, and organizing events — but he knows that the reality of agency life is far more complex.

“College teaches you the basics of what a PR practitioner does, but it’s not everything,” he explains. “Some things you can only learn when you’re actually doing the work.”

That awareness extends to how he views the future of the industry. Adam is acutely aware that public relations today looks nothing like it did a decade ago.

“Most public relation agencies have started using AI, so they don’t need as many PR practitioners anymore,” he comments. “Even ideation comes from AI these days, so it’s definitely different from how it used to be.”

For Adam, this means keeping an open mind and refusing to limit

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himself to a single path.

“I want to specialize in public relations, but I’m not limiting myself to it,” he says. “As I’ve been sending in my resume, I try to look for companies where I can be a great help. Even if it’s outside of public relations.”

**“Even ideation comes from AI these days, so it’s definitely different from how it used to be.”**



Episode 19: Nur Humaira, Brand Strategy Associate Executive

## THRIVING IN UNPREDICTABILITY.

Young brand strategist Nur Humaira has seen it all in her first year in the industry. From meeting clients, crafting campaigns, to experimenting with content strategies, Humaira thrives on the daily variety her role brings.

“You’re constantly a newbie in this industry,” she says. “Every day you learn something new from clients, colleagues, the industry. You never know what’s going to happen when you show up to work that day.”

Nearly two years into her role, Humaira admits to making her fair share of mistakes. She describes failure as a part of everyday life, noting that the role requires patience, empathy, and the ability to navigate competing priorities.

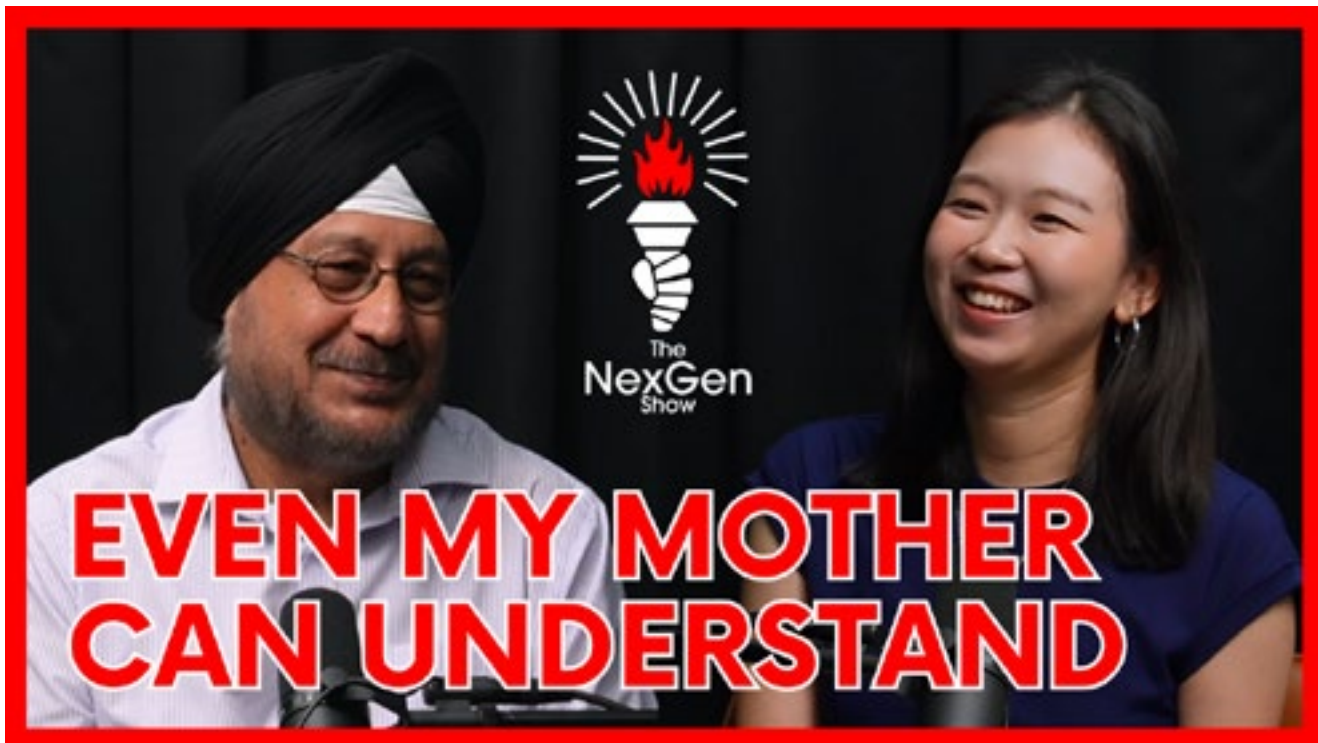
“There was one time I remember vividly that I client texted us at 8:56PM and asked us to revert back by 9:00PM,” she laughs. “That’s only 4 minutes for us to make the change!”

In the episode, Humaira also touches on the increasing dependence on AI tools to solve creative problems.

“You can always tell if something is produced by AI or if it’s produced by humans,” she says. “Maybe the public won’t know, but as a creative, you can always tell it’s not authentic.”

**“You’re constantly a newbie in this industry, every day you learn something new from clients, colleagues, the industry.”**

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### Episode 20: Joy Teng, Account Executive

#### LOOK MA.

The NexGen Show celebrated its 20th episode with a conversation that reminds us why we started this in the first place.

In the episode, young account executive Joy Teng reflects on her first six months in the rapidly evolving industry of advertising.

“It’s very tiring but I’m having fun,” she muses. “There is a beauty in seeing how everything works together, from creatives to strategic planning to my job in account management.”

When asked about her biggest learning curve, Joy expressed her challenge with writing briefs that clearly communicate the campaign objectives to creative teams.

“Writing a brief is not an easy job,” she explains. “I was once told that writing a good and clear brief means that anyone can read it and understand what to do next.”

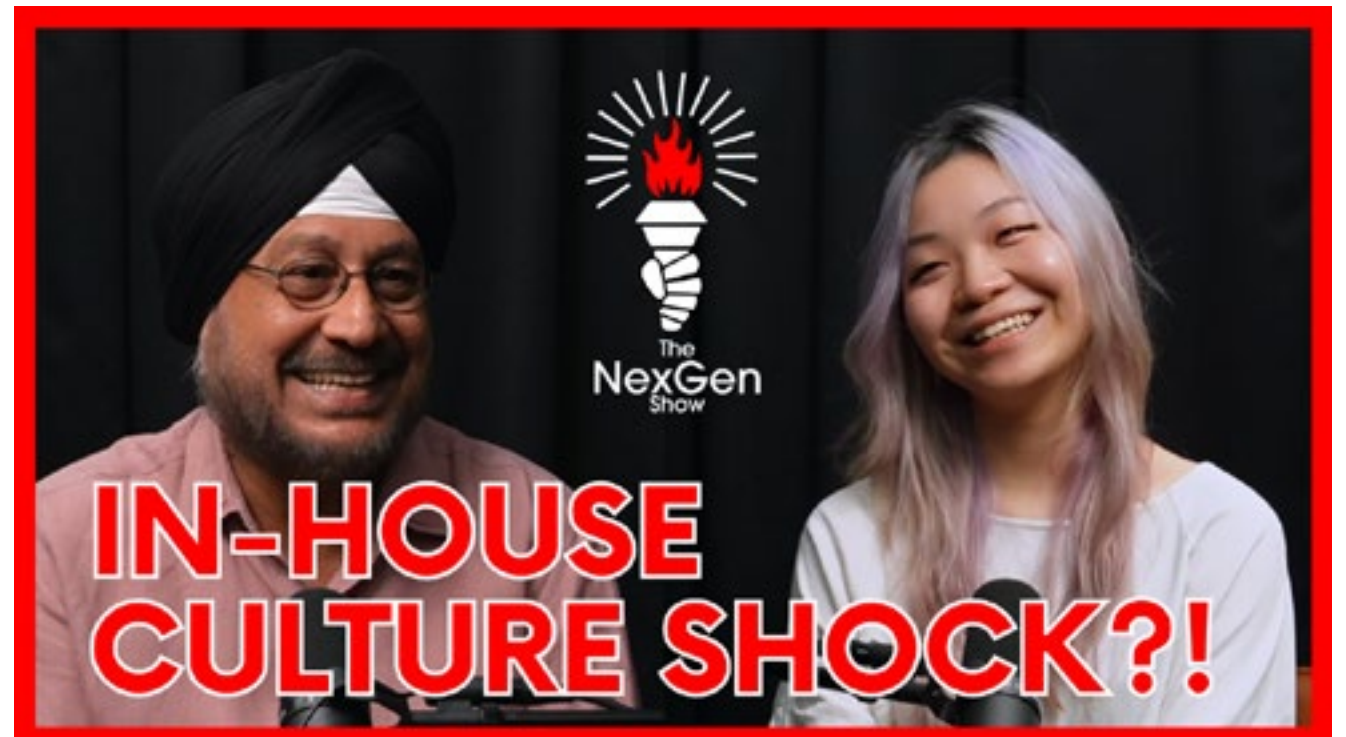
“Even if that person is my mother,” she adds with a laugh.

She also shares her thoughts on using tools like ChatGPT to aid her process.

“It’s good for gathering information quickly, but you still need to incorporate your own thinking and human experiences with the brand before you can shape any form of strategy.”



**“Writing a brief is not an easy job, I was once told that writing a good and clear brief means that anyone can read it and understand what to do next.”**



### Episode 21: Jade Lim, Graphic Designer

#### CAUTION ON HUSTLE CULTURE.

Unlike her peers, Jade Lim isn’t in a rush to return to the agency grind. In her episode, the young graphic designer reflects on her evolution from agency deadlines to the slower, more intentional pace of in-house creative work.

“The fast nature of agencies means you usually have two weeks to come up with key visuals,” she shares. “To see that process lengthen to three months or more was eye opening for me.”

Jade also credits Austin Howe’s

best-selling book *Designers Don't Read* for shifting her perspective on advertising. The book is known for critiquing the rigid silos of agency work where ideas tend to be bound by job titles.

“People tend to forget that marketing is a collaborative effort. They think that you need to be a writer or designer to have creative ideas,” she explains. “But a great idea can come from anywhere.”

When it comes to AI taking over the role of designers, Jade remains pragmatic.

“AI is a tool,” she says. “It can generate visuals, but you still need to have fundamentals in creative thinking and problem-solving to use it effectively. So I don't think AI can just replace graphic designers. I think it takes more than that.”

**“People tend to forget that marketing is a collaborative effort. They think that you need to be a writer or designer to have creative ideas.”**



**Episode 22: Oliver Chong,  
Strategy Planning Executive**

## **NOT THE WHAT, BUT THE WHY.**

Oliver Chong is a strategic planner whose approach to strategy reflects the modern advertising landscape where creativity, data, and human insight overlap.

“It's no longer just about media or creative strategy,” she explains. “My boss coins our role as ‘converged strategists’ because what we really do is assess both our media and creative toolkits to provide the most well-rounded solutions.”

At the heart of her work is the delicate balance between human understanding and analytical rigor. She stresses the importance of understanding motivations and values beyond trends — particularly with Gen Z audiences.

“When brands think of Gen Z marketing, they often think of TikTok trends and slang,” she explains. “But we should be looking deeper to discover the why, then you can fit the why to the role that your brand can play.”

With most of her role dedicated to new business pitches, she reveals how these high-adrenaline moments push strategists to think boldly and bring fresh energy back into everyday work.

“As a strategist, you get to have a say in how the campaign is going to roll out,” she shares. “I’m always inspired to create something that we’ve never seen in the market.”

**“When brands think of Gen Z marketing, they often think of TikTok trends and slang.”**

 Spotify  YouTube



Episode 23: Pavetheran Nagarajan, Copywriter

## MAKING AI YOUR SIDEKICK.

Some people find their careers with laser focus. Others stumble into them — and stay for the love of the craft.

An English linguistics graduate who “never knew what he wanted to do,” Pavetheran Nagarajan entered advertising by following where the money took him.

“I never knew what I wanted to do after graduating. I just applied to jobs across all kinds of industries, and I only looked at the pay they were offering,” he laughs.

What began as a pragmatic decision soon became a calling, as

advertising agency life, language, and the power of words began to take root.

Today, he’s not just a copywriter. He’s a writer who collaborates daily with ChatGPT, or as the artificial intelligence has named itself, Marv.

“I treat Marv like my junior,” he shares. “He reports to me, we work together, we collaborate on everything. You could say that he’s an extension of my brain.”

Pavi admits that it might sound crazy to say that your AI has a persona, but he doesn’t see it as a replacement for human creativity, but a tool to accelerate learning and creativity.

“With all the access to technology and resources, I think anyone can be good at copywriting if you keep at it,” he says. “But you have to keep learning, researching, and growing yourself as a person.”

**“With all the access to technology and resources, I think anyone can be good at copywriting if you keep at it, but you have to keep learning, researching, and growing yourself as a person.”**



### Episode 24: Nur Izzaty, Marketing Lead

## MAKING IT HAPPEN, ONE STORE AT A TIME.

Having started her career in agencies and now leading marketing on the client side, Nur Izzaty would have never imagined that she would have a role marketing one of Malaysia's most recognizable brands.

"When I first got the offer to join Pos Malaysia, my first thought was: am I good enough for this brand?" she admits. "You only have to say the word 'Pos' and everyone knows that you're referring to Pos Malaysia and not any other brand. It's that legendary."

Despite the brand's long-standing recognition, her real challenge lies in introducing Pos Shop, the brand's growing chain of convenience stores, to an audience that still primarily associates Pos Malaysia with postal services.

"Even our media agency thought that Pos Shop was selling stationery and stamps," she recalls. "I thought to myself, if even our media agency couldn't grasp the concept, then we have an even bigger challenge with larger audiences."

From brand awareness challenges to facing off against other convenience store giants, Izzaty underscores the importance of

having an honest and collaborative relationship with their agency partner.

"Whenever I have limited knowledge in certain areas, I'm always honest with my agency counterpart and they're more than happy to walk me through it," she shares. "I'm so grateful for that, and I learn a lot from them."

## "Even our media agency thought that Pos Shop was selling stationery and stamps."



### Episode 25: Benjamin Chua, Copywriter

## LESS TYPING, MORE THINKING.

With a background in international studies and English literature, Benjamin Chua stumbled into advertising during a time of uncertainty — and discovered a passion for ideation, storytelling, and being surrounded by creativity.

"I love the energy when I talk to fellow creatives," he shares. "It's inspiring to see them being really invested in their work, and it helped

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build my own love for it. Now I'm always looking forward to the next big idea that pops out from my head."

Even in today's AI-driven landscape, Ben sees a necessity to his role. Artificial intelligence might be able to draft text, but the true craft of a copywriter lies in conceptual thinking and bringing context, emotion, and strategy to every word.

"Now with ChatGPT, I feel like our roles as creatives tends to lean back into traditional advertising," he shares. "Especially these days when we only have one to two seconds to catch our audience's attention before it disappears."

A typical day for Ben is packed with meetings, planning sessions, and client discussions. Yet, he finds ways to carve out mental space for creativity.

"In advertising, you never stop working," he muses. "I find myself living, breathing, and thinking of ideas. When I'm out on the street, I'm observing people. When I see an ad that interests me, I'll just stand there and watch it. It's a never-ending process."

**"I love the energy when I talk to fellow creatives, It's inspiring to see them being really invested in their work, and it helped build my own love for it. Now I'm always looking forward to the next big idea that pops out from my head."**



### Episode 26: Joshua Palmer, Creative Lead

## TRUST BY DESIGN.

When a marketer has a vision, it often falls on the designer to bring it to life — visually, emotionally, and consistently.

In the episode, creative designer Joshua Palmer opens up about the early days when he was handed a blank slate. No brand guidelines, no precedent, just a challenge.

"My boss did have trust issues at first," he laughs. "He wanted the designs to be exactly how he imagined it to be, but we had no brand guidelines. Nothing. Zero."

One strong design was all it took. From that moment, Joshua became more than a designer. He became a visual authority within the company, shaping the brand identity for 140 to 160 assets a month across email, social and paid media.

"I'm constantly designing in my head, way before I even open the design file," he admits. "I already know where the text should go, how big it should be, what people will read first."

That thinking makes him a powerful partner to his teammates, but what grounds him is his personal philosophy that guides how he works with colleagues and bosses alike.

"I always tell my boss that I don't see them as a boss. I see

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them as a friend that I would like to help,” he explains. “I want us to gain knowledge together, so that we can help each other grow.”

**“I’m constantly designing in my head, way before I even open the design file.”**

 Spotify  YouTube



**Episode 27: Demi Tan, Brand Manager**

## FAME BREEDS FAME.

In the world of fast-moving consumer goods, instinct alone is never enough.

Behind every successful product launch lies a delicate balance of science, consumer insight and brand storytelling — and that is where Demi Tan has built her career. But before she ever worked with influencers or managed an SKU, Demi was analysing data, tracking retail performance and listening to what consumers were really saying online.

“I started my career in a research company,” she explains. “It was fascinating work, but I realized it was always going to be more theory based. I wanted to try something more practical and tangible, hence the move to marketing.”

Today, she sits at the intersection of research and real-world marketing in one of the most competitive consumer categories in the market. There, she learned the importance of influencers in driving awareness and product education.

“Influencers are crucial in leading the conversation,” she explains. “They don’t just show off their lifestyle, they also show how to use the product. That’s where we need them the most.”

When asked whether a product of mediocre quality could flourish with the backing of a powerful influencer, Demi gives it straight: Yes, it can.

“Key opinion leaders are very important to lead the conversation,” she explains. “With a celebrity endorsement, any product can be amplified.”

**“It was fascinating work, but I realized it was always going to be more theory based. I wanted to try something more practical and tangible, hence the move to marketing.”**





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Episode 28: John Foong,  
Marketing Manager

### THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE.

Most interns hunt for jobs. John Foong built an agency instead.

That decision, taken at the end of his diploma internship with five other friends, would become the defining chapter of John's professional life.

"Clients always told us we looked too young," he laughs. "So we'd say, 'Give us a chance. We're fresh, we've got some ideas. Let us explore alongside you.' And that's how we started picking up clients."

For a year and a half, John and five friends hustled like a real agency. They pulled all-nighters on pitches, slept on sleeping bags in their makeshift office, and lived on instant noodles and client leftovers.

"There were many nights in our small makeshift office in my dad's house," he recalls fondly. "Every time we had a pitch, we would stay overnight with sleeping bags. We were very gung-ho."

While the team went their separate ways during the pandemic, John reflects on those fearless beginnings and how those early lessons continue to sharpen his craft. Today, he finds his purpose in brand strategy, where he shapes narratives and supports creative teams across the board.

"One thing my mentor taught me was that a good strategist wears three hats: detective, journalist, and lawyer," he shares. "To wear those three hats, you need to be very sharp and that's what I'm learning now."

**"Clients always told us we looked too young, so we'd say, 'Give us a chance. We're fresh, we've got some ideas. Let us explore alongside you.' And that's how we started picking up clients."**



Episode 29: Jezzebelle Mcast,  
Marketing & Public Relations  
Undergraduate

### REPRESENTING MALAYSIA ON THE GLOBAL STAGE.

Even before taking her first step into the industry, Jezzebelle Mcast is making her presence felt in the local marketing and public relations scene.

From recently winning the Malaysia Digital Association d Young Achievers Award to representing Malaysia as the L'Oréal Brandstorm National Champion, she embodies a new generation of talent defined by resilience, courage, and ambition.

In the episode, Jezzebelle shares the lessons she learned from competitions and how they're shaping her path into the workforce.

"Initially I didn't want to join any competitions because I'm someone who likes to stay in my comfort zone," she reveals. "But when I first got a taste of joining one, I found myself chasing that sense of achievement."

When asked about her choice to pursue marketing and public relations as her career, Jezzebelle expresses her interest in both entertainment and beauty industries, while keeping an eye on the business side of things.

"I like a lot of balance in my life, so I want a job that is fun but also has some seriousness," she shares. "I used to study digital media production, but I decided not to mix my hobby with my career."

**"I like a lot of balance in my life, so I want a job that is fun but also has some seriousness."**



### Episode 30: Shaheera Shahrein, Creative Copywriter

## STAY COMPETITIVE, BUT STAY KIND.

Our milestone 30th episode shines the spotlight on Shaheera Shahrein, a rising copywriter whose journey into advertising began in perhaps the most unusual of times — during the pandemic.

"I was a fresh graduate with no portfolio, except for a website that I built as a fun hobby on the side," she shares. "It wasn't polished, it was probably bad, but I think it showed my interest in the industry."

But getting through the door was just the beginning. For Shaheera, early lessons came fast and hard. From ideas being rejected, to harsh comments from her senior at work, these moments reframed the way she sees the industry today.

"Everyone keeps saying that this is the business of ideas, but I realised it's actually the business of rejection," she reflects. "Now I find the fun in getting rejected, and having the opportunity to prove them wrong."

When asked if she would ever run her own agency, Shaheera shares a philosophy that is refreshingly modern: don't change the game, change how you work to face the game.

"If I had to start my own agency, I would take the opportunity to do

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something a little bit different,” she explains. “There’s a new world out there, and you have to adapt to the way people are working now.”

**“Everyone keeps saying that this is the business of ideas, but I realised it’s actually the business of rejection.”**



Episode 31: Crystal Lam, Junior Copywriter

## FINDING HER TRUE CALLING.

What does physiotherapy have in common with advertising? At first glance, not much. But for Crystal Lam, both careers share one crucial thing: care.

In the episode, Crystal shares how a childhood love for animals, a degree in physiotherapy, and a leap of faith into writing led her into the world of advertising — a place she now calls home.

“I always loved to write as a kid, so when I had the chance to do

copywriting, I fell in love with it,” she shares.

Like many young creatives, Crystal admits she initially imagined the industry through the glossy lens of pop culture. But once inside an agency, she quickly discovered that the real magic of advertising lives behind the scenes — in the thinking, the rewriting, and the relentless pursuit of the right idea.

“The process of being creative is all about trying, which I think is a beautiful and weird thing,” she says. “It’s just learning and trying every second, every day.”

While awards and recognition are part of the industry’s DNA, Crystal remains refreshingly grounded about her ambitions. Awards may come one day, but they are not what drives her.

“On paper, who wouldn’t want to win an award?” she laughs. “But rather than winning awards and competitions, what I would prefer is winning people’s hearts.”

**“The process of being creative is all about trying, which I think is a beautiful and weird thing, it’s just learning and trying every second, every day.”**



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### Episode 32: Amirah Arshad, Copywriter

## THE VOICE OF 10 MILLION GIRLS.

What does it take to be both the voice of 10 million girls around the world and a young creative finding her way in the advertising industry?

For Amirah Arshad, the answer lies in balancing passion with perseverance.

Amirah shares her extraordinary journey that spans more than a decade with the Malaysian Girl Guides Association, where she rose to become a global advocacy champion representing girls at the United Nations, to her current role as a copywriter navigating pitches and rejections in agency life.

“Because I’ve been a girl guide for so many years, people are always expecting me to be more,” she shares. “But copywriting is something I just started and it’s still a learning phase for me.”

Her story bridges two worlds that may seem far apart but are deeply connected: grassroots activism and brand storytelling. Whether it was helping refugee women access aid during the pandemic, or helping brands uncover solutions that go beyond campaigns to address real business problems, Amirah’s perspective underscores how creativity can be a force for impact.

“Being a girl guide and doing all this work outside, I can see the brief beyond just the creative,” she explains. “I try to see things from an activist kind of lens, like what do people need, who am I talking to, and how do they actually feel.”

**“Because I’ve been a girl guide for so many years, people are always expecting me to be more.”**



### Episode 33: Anson Goh, Regional Performance Marketing Lead

## MAKING HIS MARK ON THE REGIONAL STAGE.

When Anson Go finally took a seat on The NexGen Show, it felt less like the arrival of a rising talent and more like the confirmation of something the industry already knew: this is a marketer who has moved faster, further and with more intent than most of his generation.

From his humble beginnings as a digital marketing executive to a regional performance marketing lead for a global FMCG brand, this rising

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star's journey began with curiosity rather than certainty.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do at first," he admits. "I ended up going with a generalised role like digital marketing executive in order to build my foundation."

Six years later, Anson oversees campaigns that span Southeast Asia and North Asia, but remains one of the youngest professionals in every room he enters. He often finds himself advising teams far older and more experienced than he is — a dynamic that, in Asian markets, can be particularly sensitive.

"Experience is important, but in today's digital era, skills are just as needed," he shares. "If you have the facts right, you can justify your approach even to those older and more experienced than you."

**"I didn't know what I wanted to do at first, I ended up going with a generalised role like digital marketing executive in order to build my foundation."**



### Episode 34: Thong Jean, Brand Manager & Entrepreneur

## LEADING FROM THE GUT.

Thong Jean is a young entrepreneur taking on a unique challenge — breathing new life into OSN, her family's 20-year-old health brand, for a new generation of consumers.

When she first joined the business, she quickly recognised the need to sharpen the message. Her father wanted to communicate every single benefit the product offered. Jean took a different approach.

"In the end, I summarised it. Let's just focus on gut health and use this angle to reach people," she shares. That clarity became the brand's central marketing pillar.

Without a formal marketing background, she relies on observations of global wellness culture. Her instincts have led to a major brand refresh, blending Japanese heritage with a Western wellness lifestyle aesthetic.

Crucially, Jean is not betting on digital alone. The brand runs frequent offline events, bringing customers and influencers together to build genuine community and brand belief. At the same time, pharmacy activations create a seamless loop between online discovery and offline purchase. Influencer marketing plays a similarly

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long-term role. Jean works with creators on a retainer basis, allowing them to experience the product over months and speak authentically about the results.

“Our product is not a quick fix, so we sponsor our influencers on a monthly basis,” she explains. “Rather than a one-off campaign, most of our influencers end up championing our products because they can really see the benefits.”

**“In the end, I summarised it. Let’s just focus on gut health and use this angle to reach people.”**



**Episode 35: Adlyn Dania,  
Public Relations & Marketing  
Undergraduate**

## **FROM EMILY IN PARIS TO REALITY IN PJ.**

Like many university students, Adlyn Dania once believed that the public relations industry would be like an episode of Emily In Paris.

“I used to think that working in a PR agency meant that I would get to meet celebrities, attend events,

and wear glamorous clothes,” she laughs. “Once I started my first semester, I realised that wasn’t the case.”

Today, she views marketing and public relations as deeply thoughtful work that blends strategy, psychology, and constant learning.

In the episode of the podcast, she reflects on how one internship at a major Malaysian household brand reframed her understanding of what it really means to communicate on behalf of something bigger than yourself.

“It was such an eye-opening experience to be sitting behind a laptop, crafting an article from the company’s perspective that would be put out into the world,” she muses.

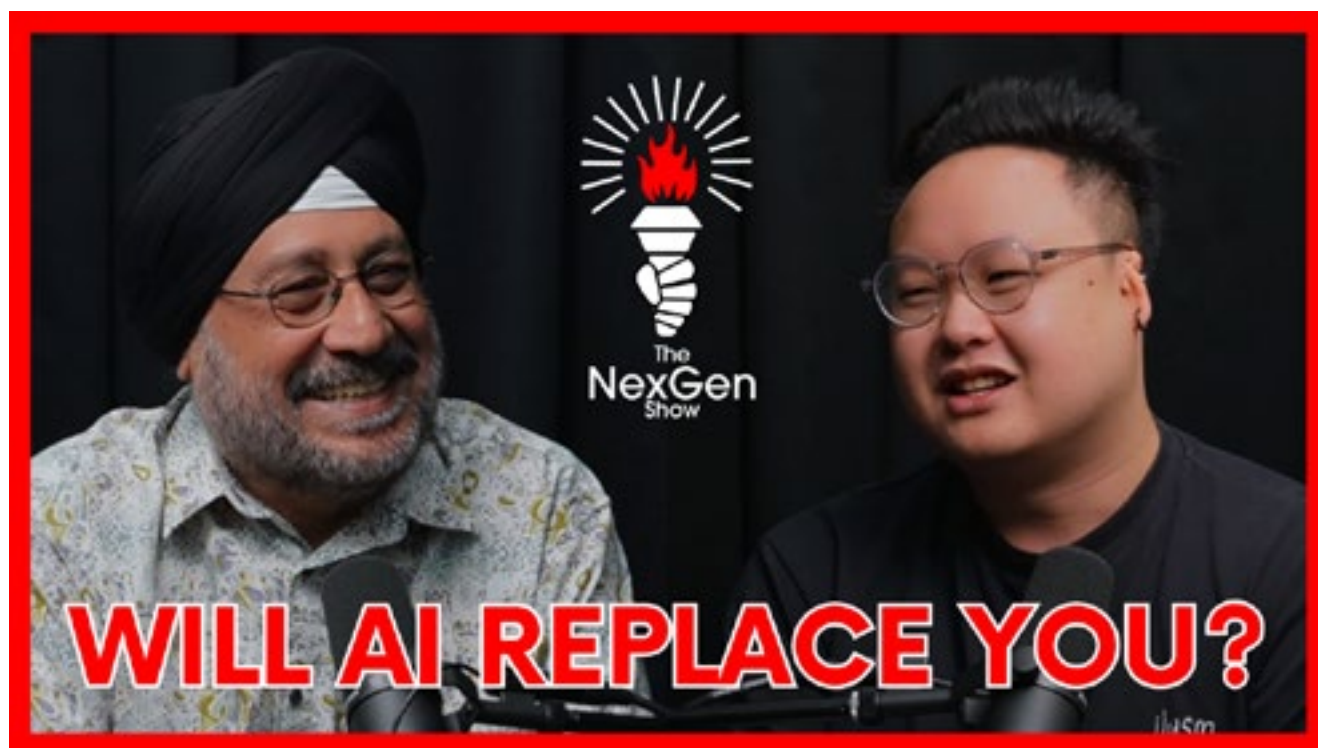
Looking ahead, Adlyn sees public relations evolving alongside technology, with digital platforms like Instagram and TikTok playing a central role in how brands connect with Gen Z and beyond.

“We have to adapt to new technologies and new strategies,” she shares. “But as people say, old is gold, and we can still rely on the basics while exploring new things.”

**“We have to adapt to new technologies and new strategies.”**



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### Episode 36: Chris Chiang, Senior Art Director

## IF AI CAN REPLACE YOU, BE BETTER.

From sketchbooks and whiteboards, to award stages and culture shock, the latest episode of The NexGen Show spotlights a creative who has quietly but steadily carved out his place in the industry. Chris Chiang first entered advertising at just 20 and clocked nearly eight intense years in the business before most people figure out their second job.

“I was already excited to create when I was a student,” he shares. “So when I graduated, I didn’t want to waste time wondering what’s next. I knew what I wanted to do was to create.”

Now a senior art director with a few Kancils and Dragons under his belt, Chris is refreshingly honest about what that recognition means to him.

“For me, the real achievement is when you finish the work and it’s out there. That’s the award for me,” he says. “Sometimes I wonder, am I chasing awards or am I chasing good ideas? I would rather focus on good ideas, and if it wins an award, that’s a bonus.”

The episode also dives into a topic reshaping the industry: artificial intelligence. He recalls a snarky remark from a senior that stuck with him.

“If AI can replace you, then maybe you should be better,” he laughs. “As humans, you have a heart and a brain. AI can never replace that. So it’s up to you how much more you are learning and listening.”

**“Sometimes I wonder, am I chasing awards or am I chasing good ideas? I would rather focus on good ideas, and if it wins an award, that’s a bonus.”**



### Episode 37: Amira Mahathir, Copywriter

## LEARN HOW TO HOLD YOUR OWN HAND.

Born in Croatia and raised across multiple continents, Amira Mahathir’s journey into the Malaysian advertising industry was anything but linear.

The daughter of a diplomat, her childhood was shaped by constant movement — from Canada to Switzerland, back to Malaysia, then on to Tokyo — giving her a global perspective long before she

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entered the workforce. Despite this international upbringing, advertising was never part of the plan.

“I did my degree in politics,” she explains. “Government dad, politics child — it all made sense. I knew nothing about advertising, but I just decided to give it a try.”

Her first day on the job was immediate and unforgiving. Industry jargon flew past her. Acronyms meant nothing. She was thrown into meetings filled with unfamiliar terminology, tight deadlines and high expectations. It was a sink-or-swim environment, and like many before her, Amira learned by doing.

“It’s like teaching kids how to swim. They take off their floaties and put you in the deep end,” she laughs. “But I think the fun thing about advertising is that no one really holds your hand. You kind of have to hold your own hand and just do it.”

**“It’s like teaching kids how to swim. They take off their floaties and put you in the deep end, but I think the fun thing about advertising is that no one really holds your hand.”**



**Episode 38: Nurul Nadhirah, Innovation Experiential Specialist**

## **MAKING TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENTIAL.**

Big tech may dominate the headlines. But for young marketer Nurul Nadhirah, it’s not about the buzzwords. It is about making innovation make sense.

In the episode, she shares how she has built a career translating complex technologies into immersive brand experiences that people can actually understand and engage with.

“I create spaces where those people can actually try technology like virtual reality or robotics,” she explains. “That’s how I explain what it does and how it can fit into their industry.”

Prior to building brand experiences, Nadhirah spent her early career in the fast-moving world of fintech. Entering the market when mobile payments were still unfamiliar, she recalls the challenge of shifting entrenched behaviours.

“Back then, not many people used their phones to pay,” she recalls. “The way you tell the story had to be convincing, because people didn’t think that paying with their phones was secure.”

Beyond brand engagement, Nadhirah highlights the growing educational value of experiential

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spaces. Universities, lecturers, and students regularly visit to explore emerging technologies and experience real-world applications.

“I often meet students who come to the experience centers I helped build to see the technology up close,” she shares. “The experience helps them reconfirm or even adjust their final year projects to fulfill a real problem that exists out there.”

**“The way you tell the story had to be convincing, because people didn’t think that paying with their phones was secure.”**



Episode 39: Cindy Khoo,  
Media Manager

## LEARNING TO WORK BETTER.

In an industry defined by speed, shifting platforms, and relentless demands, staying motivated is often the hardest part of the job. For Cindy Khoo, a young media professional who has risen quickly over the past five years, the answer is not found in titles or timelines — but in people, purpose, and perspective.

“I work with very good teams that motivate me to go to work every day, and there’s always new things coming up to excite people,” she shares. “That’s why it’s still fun for me to be in the industry.”

Recently recognised one of the industry’s Rising Stars and a regular presenter at the APPIES, her growth has been swift by any standard. Yet ambition, for her, is tempered with realism.

In the episode, Cindy is candid about the emotional toll of the job. “I cry a lot,” she admits. “What keeps me going is that I want to achieve something more. I want things to be completed in a satisfactory way.”

That drive, however, came at a cost. Last year, she was hospitalised due to an unsustainable work cycle. The experience forced a reset. “You only live once. That’s your own body and your own life,” she reflects. “You need to find something purposeful and meaningful to yourself.”

Today, balance comes from stepping away — spending time with friends, working out, and practising yoga. Small acts, but essential ones, in an industry that rarely pauses.

**“You only live once. That’s your own body and your own life.”**





**Episode 40: Nicole Cheah,  
Senior Account Executive**

## LEAD THE WAY WITH EMPATHY.

Three years into the advertising industry, Nicole Cheah already understands a truth many only arrive at much later — great work rarely succeeds on craft alone. It succeeds, or fails, on people.

Now a senior account executive, her trial by fire came during her internship when she was placed in a company known for its relentless pace.

“You wouldn’t imagine how many times I cried in the office toilet alone,” she laughs. “But all of this is just a growing curve. Slowly, I learned how to manage timelines better, how to talk to clients, and how to manage my team.”

Her early years gave Nicole exposure to one of the industry’s most underappreciated skills: navigating personalities.

“Creative people have a lot of different personalities,” she observes. “Artists tend to be more outgoing and vibrant, while copywriters can be a little more introverted. I need to suit different personalities if I want to build better relationships with my team.”

This people-first mindset is central to her role. When asked what she would like to see done better in the industry, her solution

is not structural, but human. “I think more understanding would help everybody. Just be kind to one another,” she says.

## “Artists tend to be more outgoing and vibrant, while copywriters can be a little more introverted.”



**Episode 41: Siti Nurzulaika,  
Senior Product Executive**

## CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN. PRIORITISE WHAT MATTERS.

A young marketer’s career story cuts through the usual graduate-success narrative with something more honest: doubt, failure, and the quiet power of mentorship.

Siti Nurzulaika began her journey in an unlikely place. With a degree in international business and no clear direction, she entered a management trainee programme as a way to explore.

“My mentors in the company actually spotted my talent before I did,” she comments. “They told me I had the talent and the right skills to be a good marketer, and vouched

for me to have a placement in the marketing department.”

The episode also dives into the pressure young professionals feel around failure and progress. Coming from an internship at a small start-up, she felt out of place among her peers with blue-chip backgrounds.

“I felt so small because everyone that came in had interned at big organisations, but I never experienced that corporate environment,” she shares. Instead of shrinking back, she chose to view it as a learning opportunity.

“I have a lot of difficult conversations with my mentors to get their feedback,” she explains. “Because I see feedback not as setbacks, but as something that motivates me to be better.”

**“I felt so small because everyone that came in had interned at big organisations, but I never experienced that corporate environment.”**



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